

July 1, 2020

Dear Live Oak Charter Families and Friends,

We have sincerely appreciated the participation and engagement that so many have shared through the surveys, town hall meetings, and individual correspondence. Voicing of your thoughts, feelings, questions, concerns, and especially your suggestions are highly valued, and make a genuine impact on the decisions we are making in planning next school year.

The following are two survey links and a Zoom link to today's Town Hall followed by some answers to your questions regarding reopening in the fall.

Surveys:

We have an incredible response of 75% of families responding to our most recent survey on fall 20/21 planning. Thank you to those who have taken the time to give us your feedback. If you have not had the chance yet, there is still time to respond, just click [here](#).

On behalf of the Grow the Music (GTM) team, they too are looking for feedback and community expectations as they plan the GTM response to COVID-19. Please spend 5 minutes on this four-question survey to make your voice heard! [Grow the Music survey](#).

Town Hall 7/1 at 4pm Zoom Link:

There will be a Town Hall today, Wednesday, July 1 at 4pm. The topic will be on looking forward and the purpose of this Town Hall is to connect and hear from you regarding what you value about Live Oak and in particular the values you hope to see in the 2020-21 school year (see *Hybrid, Cohorts and 6-foot distancing models* below). We continue to collaborate with the Live Oak Foundation as partners in holding these Town Hall meetings and value the community connection they create. Thank you to Robert Bunce, Debbie Fox and Jerusha Ogden for your ongoing collaboration and efforts and the Live Oak Board will be partnering on these efforts going forward. **Town Hall, July 1 at 4pm Zoom link:**
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74863268754?pwd=UU5aS3pUWWhzZGYzeEdFZkFqU0YvQT09>
Meeting ID: 748 6326 8754 Password: 0ZjJi0

Based on what I am receiving from the community in general and the desire to engage and keep the entire community informed, I put together a list of questions and answers about the fall 20/21. You can find this FAQ following the close of this letter.

Again, I appreciate everyone's understanding and patience while being in an environment that is changing rapidly. It can be nerve wracking for sure! The degree to which we can all collectively take responsibility for preventing community spread of COVID-19 will impact life at school. I would like to suggest we all do our part by wearing masks and practicing social distancing. When this all passes, we can celebrate with greetings, handshakes, and hugs!

The Administrative staff and I agreed to take some much-needed time off and we thought now would be better than later. The Live Oak office will officially open back up on July 13. Once I

am back in action, I'll plan on sending out another communication to the community during that week of July 13.

Best,
Justin

School Reopening Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

What is the most recent Reopening Guidelines from Sonoma County?

Since Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) released its guidelines two weeks ago, we have received two revisions. The current one is version 3, which is an indication of how quickly reopening guidance is being updated. We are being advised to plan for **a range of reopening scenarios**, including:

Hybrid and 6-foot distancing models: In **AA/BB** cohort model we would divide our classes into two cohorts. Cohort A, for example would attend school for two full days, while Cohort B is doing distance learning for the other two and a half days. Then the cohorts would flip flop. In this model, students are on campus four days a week (two full days for each cohort) and then participate in two and a half days of distance learning.

After receiving community and faculty input around the importance of maintaining integrity to our Waldorf roots and pedagogical approaches along with the desire to have students back in school for five days a week, we came up with an alternative hybrid model called **AM/PM** cohort model. In this model, the all students would be divided into two cohorts, one morning cohort (AM) and one afternoon cohort (PM). Students would attend their cohort time daily (three hours each), five days a week. Either hybrid model will need to ensure best adherence to the health and safety guidelines for cleaning and social distancing.

4-Foot Distancing Model: SCOE and County health will consider narrowing physical distancing in schools within a month of reopening with 6-foot distancing. After 30 days they will examine the data before making a final determination.

Distance Learning: We also need to be prepared for an all-distance-learning model in the event that we are directed to shelter-in-place.. Having school-wide distance learning is a possibility we must prepare for.. Live Oak faculty have spent time debriefing with each other as well as community feedback and input in order to improve our distance learning and help make this more effective.

Back to school full time: Providing a robust educational experience that is inspired by the Waldorf principles and community spirit for five full days a week is something we look forward to. We anticipate this again in the future.

What is our reopening the campus plan?

There is a lot of thought and planning going into the reopening in the fall. For example, we are looking at installing plexiglass covers in the office, having markers on the ground and floors to guide foot traffic throughout the campus in order to minimize potential social distancing compromises, arrows on the pavement to indicate the best route to take to the play yard and how to best return to class. Also, visual cues will be placed as a reminder of maintaining six feet of distance in various places, teachers will incorporate social distancing and health guidelines into their daily lessons, hand sanitizer dispensers are to be placed outside classrooms, and handwashing will happen at regular intervals throughout the day. We expect to install additional hand-washing stations and identify and create more outdoor learning opportunities.

Here are some other health precautions we are working on as a school: **(As you read the following, please keep in mind that these may change based on the guidance and recommendations of Sonoma County officials.)**

- Signs and messaging- We will post signage to reinforce safety guidelines and incorporate health and safety protocols into our lessons.
- Isolation Rooms- We will have social isolation rooms for students/staff that present symptoms where they will stay until transportation is available.
- Health Checks- All staff and students will use thermometers in order to take temperature readings before entering their classroom.
- Cleaning- We will follow recommended cleaning protocols with guidance from local health agencies.
- Training- New procedures and training for all staff and students on health and safety behaviors that reduce spreading COVID-19. These include safety and cleaning protocols, social distancing requirements, personal hygiene and handwashing.
- Limited Contact- Contact between student cohorts and with non-instructional staff will be limited. Students will stick together in cohorts for as much as possible.
- Contact Tracing- Students and staff are assigned to their specific classroom and will be monitored for movement potential contact tracing purposes.
- Face Mask- Per current guidelines, staff and any student at least 12 years of age will be wearing face masks. Mask protocols for students under 12 years old are currently under evaluation. Any student that is not able to remove a mask unaided will not be required to wear a mask.
- Adequate Supplies- We are only buying EPA approved cleaning materials as well as receiving PPE from the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE).
- Exposure Notification- The county health office has provided protocols for notification of families and staff of potential exposure. These protocols include guidance on maintaining privacy of staff and student medical information.
- Limited Sharing- We will adjust some of our practices in order to limit the sharing of learning supplies (pens, pencils, manipulatives, etc.)
- Desk Spacing- Desks will be spaced out and all face the same direction in alignment with the health department guidelines.
- Increased Ventilation- Replacing HVAC filters, more use of outdoor spaces, having windows and doors open, and looking into adjusting the ratio of fresh to recirculated air in HVAC systems.

- IQ Air Health Pro Plus Air Purifiers - with the recent purchase and installment of these HEPA air filtration systems in every classroom to improve air quality, particularly during fire season, we are assessing the need and cost for continued use and effectiveness.

What happens if someone tests positive for Coronavirus at school?

There are currently no plans for schools to provide any virus testing. If you suspect that someone in your household has [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or has come in contact with someone who has the virus, get [tested](#) as soon as possible. Contact the school to keep us informed of a possible COVID case in our community. Sonoma County Health will be contacted automatically of any positive cases. If the patient is a member of our community, the school will be contacted. Sonoma County health will lead a confidential contact tracing effort of anyone who may have had exposure with the school's cooperation. In this scenario partial or all campus closures are possible.

What does Contact Tracing mean?

The school will be responsible for tracking every person and their contacts throughout the day at school, so that contact tracing is simplified and accurate in the event it is required. The campus, schedule, and cohorts will be structured so that students and staff will remain as a sequestered unit throughout the day, during class, recess, and even during aftercare. This will mean that visitors (even parents and friends) required to enter campus may only do so by contacting the office ahead of time. This way we can limit the contacts to only essential workers and students.

Which Cohort would my student have?

Once cohorts are established, we will need to maintain them until conditions change or the threat of COVID-19 has passed. If in a hybrid situation, we will be able to coordinate siblings being on campus at the same time or not depending on your preference and to what extent we will be able to accommodate personal requests. We also understand that there will be important considerations from parents and teachers for certain cohort groupings. As we get closer to reopening, we will communicate our process.

Will Distance Learning Only (DLO) be an option so we can remain at Live Oak?

Although I was certain we would be able to provide DLO as an option, the recent legislature is compounding the complexity of this choice. I will keep you apprised once we have clear guidance on Live Oak's authority to offer DLO, attendance tracking, and instructional time requirements. Districts are actively working with Sonoma County Office of Education on more guidance with this particular learning model.

In the event that parents are allowed to make a choice for distance learning only, please know that we have received a lot of good feedback on what has worked and where we could improve in our methodology. Concerns have been expressed about maintaining our sense of Waldorf curriculum and some feedback suggests that the use of technology feels like a significant compromise to our program. As a school we need to embrace technology as a tool while at the same time be judicious with media use and amount of time students interact with devices. With our recent experience, your feedback, time to plan, and collaboration we are certain we can make improvements.

Will my student really have to wear a mask?

There are two concerns about mask wearing that have been clearly voiced:

1. Some prefer their children, particularly younger students, will not be required to wear masks at school, that children are far less likely to become sick from the virus. Their wishes are that children are free and excused from the current mandate requiring people two years of age and older to wear masks in public environments such as school.
2. In direct contrast, some are worried that children will not cooperate with directives from parents or teachers and take their masks off or refuse to wear them at all. This concern is about the health risks this type of action poses. All students and staff want to remain healthy this school year. **The number one priority is the health and safety of our students and staff and preventing the spread of COVID-19 to loved ones at home.**

It's important to understand that children are capable of infecting and spreading COVID-19. This is the reason that everyone must practice the prevention guidelines so very seriously and that we practice new routines and habits of prevention all the time.

What if my child has a medical reason to not wear a mask?

We understand that this may be the case for some of our students. The best way forward with this would be to consult your doctor and begin the process of verifying this request by means of providing the school with a doctor's note explicitly stating the condition and recommendation from the Doctor. If you think your child is in this category, please begin the process of the mask exemption now in case it is needed for the fall.

Can teachers wear face shields so their faces can be seen by students?

Many are wondering if teachers can wear shields instead of masks in order to hear better and see their facial expressions. With keeping a distance, shields worn by teachers will be allowed, however, Live Oak students and staff will be expected to wear masks when in close proximity of one another, when less than six feet. The reason for this is that face shields allow facial expression, but they do not stop droplets from leaving the nose and mouth area.

What do I do if I am sick but do not have COVID-19?

All students and staff that are sick will stay at home. All students and staff will be either actively (at school) or passively (at home) screened for symptoms before entering school, including taking your temperature. Parents and staff that ordinarily mask temperatures with over the counter fever reducers such as Advil or Tylenol are being asked to not do this and instead stay at home and call in sick.

What are other reasons to stay at home?

Employees and students who are sick or who have recently had [close contact](#) (longer than 15 minutes) with a person with COVID-19 need to stay home. This includes when a member of a student's household has been sick with COVID-19.

[Staff and students should stay home](#) if they or a member of their household have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#).

Staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health.

What can I do at home to prepare for the fall?

By the time we return in the fall, our students will already need to know how to practice social distancing. This is an important role we ask you to practice with your children. Children, especially under 9-years old, will learn this well if parents demonstrate their practice when going out with their children. Older children can be made more aware of the reasons to practice social distancing and can help model this for younger siblings too.

Can I provide my own formula of sanitizer for my child to use at school?

No. Please help support us with our efforts in supporting prevention measures including consistent hand hygiene from the beginning until the end of the school day. We want students to use what is provided so we can monitor use, know what is being used, keep equality of resource in mind, and stop the spread of sharing products. Using soap and water is our first choice and hand washing will be required at regular intervals throughout the school day. Hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or higher) stations will be available at different locations throughout the school.

What about cleaning?

We are developing a cleaning and disinfecting routine that will most likely need to involve everyone's cooperation. We would like to see parents and staff commit to some routine daily tasks. Deeper cleaning and disinfections will be the responsibility of Fairground maintenance and/or janitorial staff. Appropriate training will be provided so that this is done effectively.

Will you be able to have classrooms outside?

Some have expressed their desire to have outdoor classrooms. I know that currently Live Oak is a very outdoor friendly school. Outside spaces can easily be transitioned to learning environments with some simple modifications. Teachers will have their own discretion to utilize outdoor spaces as they best see fit in terms of length and frequency. As tenants of the Fairgrounds, we have limitations with where we can go because of limitations within our rental contract. Any buildings south of the middle school building will not be allowed student or staff access. This is due to health, sanitation and cleaning implications and costs. However, most outside areas immediately connecting to classrooms are available. Keep in mind that is a sporadic use option as we monitor weather which can be quite punishing with high temperatures and poor air quality, especially during fire season.

How will recess and movement work?

We will be creating cohort-oriented recess spaces so children can play within their cohort safely in a social distance manner. We anticipate teachers coordinating recess/snack possibly at different times throughout the week.

Will Live Oak offer aftercare?

The school plans to offer aftercare when we reopen. However, we will have to staff it so that cohorts remain separated until student pickup. We anticipate that the service will cost more than in the past. Those who know they will need aftercare will reserve it in advance. Temporarily, we will not be able to offer drop in care until the COVID threat has passed. Also, we do not plan on offering before school care. It is possible that preference will be given to families who opt in for full time childcare, five days a week, in order to maintain fidelity to the cohort model.